

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday. January 6. 1694.

Christmases-Day, 1693.

The Shepherds sing, and shall I silent be,
My God! no Hymn for thee? — Herb.

PINDARIC.

1.

Enough of Loves false flatt'ring Joys,
And all thote short liv'd Dreams below!
My Saviour calls, and I must go;
Vain World Farewell, with all thy glitt'ring Toys!
My Saviour claims my Lyre, and claims my Voice.
Awake! awake my Lyre!
To mightier things and bolder Notes aspire,
And make the Plains around us sten and admire!
Let's trace thote Paths to Glory o're,
Where Herbert, dearest Herbert, went before;
O more than Man! O All-divine!
Jesus thy Master was, and thou art mine.
Sweet Tham's adieu, for tho' thy Banks are fair,
We must to Jordan's happier Streams repair:
To Jordan's well known Streams, which long
Stood list'ning to the Royal Shepherd's Song;
As when Heav'n's Voice they thrice before obey'd,
And Heaps on Heaps their wond'ring Waters laid.

2.

Now let 'em gaze! now higher let 'em rise,
And turning every Christal Drop to Eyes.
See Davids Mightier Son descending from the Skys.
See how his Beams dazle the bashful Day!
See all the beaunly People him convey,
A Cloud of Stars, like Dust, mark all the flaming way.
But when below the Moon he came,
She wants the intercepted Sun no more,
But shines far brighter than before,
Outshines the Sun himself, with new-reflected Flame.
His glitt'ring Guard, so he himself commands,
Whose Nod all Nature awes,
As near our dusty Ball approacht, withdraws,
And on Heav'n's utmost Limits waiting stands.

3.

As when some General, Father of the War,
Singles his baughty Rebel from afar,
He bids his Host give back, who press in vain,
And shoots himself away, across the trembling Plain,
His Eyes like Lightning his lost Foe confound,
His Spear like Thunder nails him to the ground;
So, single comes our Lord, agan to try
The Force of his once vanquish'd Enemey:
The Wine-press he alone will tread,
Displays a Banner strangely red,
By which Captivity is Captive led.
The Banner of the Cross, in which he knows
He soon shall Conquer all his Fathers Foes:
With this on fatal Golgotha he stood,
Earth's, Heavn's, and Hell's united Force he bears,
Nor once gives back, nor once Despairs,
His Limbs all torn with Wounds, his Garments roll'd in Blood.

4.

But long he suffers here, before he close
With Deat's so sad, so sad a Scene of Woes;
To a mean Cave, Incognito he came,
And in a Manger lay,
(Ah, how unlike the same!)
Undressing all his Glories on the Way.
Where are his Royal Ensigns gone?
The King of Heav'n a mean Mechanick's Son!
Where are those Hands which did the Thunder wield,
And in the ancient dreadfull Field
Struck thro' proud Lucifer's seven-plated Sbield:
(Then first the Rebel did to fear begin)
Struck thro' his Adamantine Arms, and icorch'd his Soul
Those once — redoubtred Hands, (within?)
See where they're bound with feeble Bands!
See where the Infant Hero's forc'd to go
And seek, by Flight, a shelter from his Foe,
A petty Tyrant, whose weak Rage restrain'd
To scorn'd Judea's scanty Neck of Land.
Tho' he the same whose Arms cou'd boast
They had quell'd the Prince of all the Airy Host.
Yes, 'tis the same, altho' so strange.
And hardly credible, the Change:
So when a Star shoots glitt'ring from the Sky,
In vain we run to mark its Fall,
But nothing find at all,
Or at the most a trembling Drop descry.

5.

This saw amaz'd the gloomy Prince of Hell,
Saw at the Hebrew-Boys command,
Legions of discontented Spirits disband,
And yelling leave each silent Oracle.
How did he rave, how did he grieve,
His Iron Teeth all foaming gnash,
Whence sudden Lightnings thro' Hells Horror flash;
His shaggy sides how does he lash,
Encreasing Torments which he wou'd relieve?
" O Hell! a Boy! he crys:
" For this did I of old thro' Chaos climb,
" Push on the easie Adam's Fate and Crime,
" As I from Heav'n banish'd from Paradice?
" Nay, higher yet, of Nobler Wars I boast,
" Where endless Fame we won, altho' the Day was loft.
— Thus, might we great with small compare,
Thus huge Goliath fell, and shook the Plain,
Quell'd by the young, the valiant Swain,
Thus fell Goliath and the War:
Cursing he fell, and bit the burden'd ground,
While Blood and Brains and Soul crowd mingled thro' the
(Wound.)

6.

O David's Son! thy calm, thy peacefull Reign
Yet brighter Triumphs gave:
The King did the Priests Office not disdain,
Man to instruct and bless, and God to attone again,
Leis Noble 'tis to Conquer than to save.
The Seeds of Just, and Good, and True,
If not all lost before,
Known but obscurely, ev'n to th' Wife few,
Thou with a liberal Hand didst to the World restore.
Teach 'em both what they were and ought to be,
Restor'd their Innocence and Liberty,
Both God-like Gifts, and worthy Heav'n and Thee.
Our odious Load of Guilt thy self didst bear,
Our heavy ransom paid,
Thy self th' Atonement made,
That

That we might not despair.
O God Incarnate, help! O hear our Prayer!
Melt! even those stubborn Hearts melt down,
Who so unhappy are, they thee despise,
Heav'n and their own worst Enemies,
Who thy obliging Laws and thee disown.
O thou who giv'st both Eyes and sight,
Shine from above, and chase their Hell-born Night
With Reasons dawning Ray, and Faiths full Noon-day Light.

Quest. 1.

Wean'd from the busie Towns tumultuous Bliss,
The Country yields me Solitude and Peace:
Freedom from Want my Birth and Fortune gave,
A few good Books I have, and more may have.
My Soul at Knowledge grasps with full Desire,
And something sure of an uncommon Fire
I feel within, a more than Mortal Heat,
Something that whispers — Study and be great!
But when so vast an Ocean I descry,
Wher', as in boundless Plains, I lose my Eye;
When Learnings Sea so wide, so deep survey,
I quiver on the Shore, and dare not launch away:
Yet some small part methinks I might subdue,
Some Creek or Arm, if I beyond cou'd view;
My little Bark cou'd cruise along the Coast,
Tho' soon 'twould be i'th' wild Atlantic lost.
Be you my Pole-star then, shine bright and clear,
Direct me for what Port my Course to steer!
Say Athens, nor your Courteous Aid refuse!
What Point i'th' glorious Circle shall I choose?

Ans^w.

First know thy self! thus did the Sage advise,
For he who does not that can ne're be wise:
Then thy Creator know, his Works admire,
And learn those Sacred Words he did inspire:
This Knowledge can alone thy Mind compleat,
'Twill make thee Good, and then thou may'st be Great.

Quest. 2. You have on several Occasions, and sometimes I think without any, commended Herbert's Poetry, tho' you might as well in my Opinion, have directed your patient Reader to Rouse or Sternhold. Among the rest, I remember in the Synagogue some fine Thoughts on Confusion, as he very well calls it:

O how my Mind
Is gravell'd,
Not a Thought
That I can find,
But's ravell'd
All to nought,
Short Ends of Thred, &c.

Query. Whether by his pretty way of Expression the Author seems not to have been some Godly Tailor? and whether you have not Notoriously betray'd your want of Judgment in commending such Stuff as this to the Perusal of the Reader?

Ans^w. Mr. Herbert's Reputation is so firmly and so justly establish'd among all Persons of Piety and Ingenuity, his Sense so good, and most of his Poetry so fine, that those who Censure him will be in more danger of having their Judgments question'd, than such as with good reason Admire him. Nor can the Time he writ in, when Poetry was not near so refin'd as 'tis now, be justly objected against him, so as to make his Works of small or no Value, any more than the oddness or flatness of some Expressions and Phrases, since something of these are to be found in all other Compositions that have yet appear'd in our Language; and besides this, they were pro-

bably many of 'em made to Tunes, Mr. Herbert being so great a Musician, which every one knows will often weaken the Sense. For the Synagogue, all know 'tis none of his, tho' there are many fine Thoughts, and not a few good Lines in't, carrying all thro' it an Air and Spirit of great Sense, Piety and Devotion, much more Valuable than all the foolish Wit that has so ofteu diverted the World at so dear a Rate.

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